



**Conceptual foundations for decolonizing  
planned relocation policy, practice and  
research: Accounting for prior experiences  
of environmentally-related displacement**

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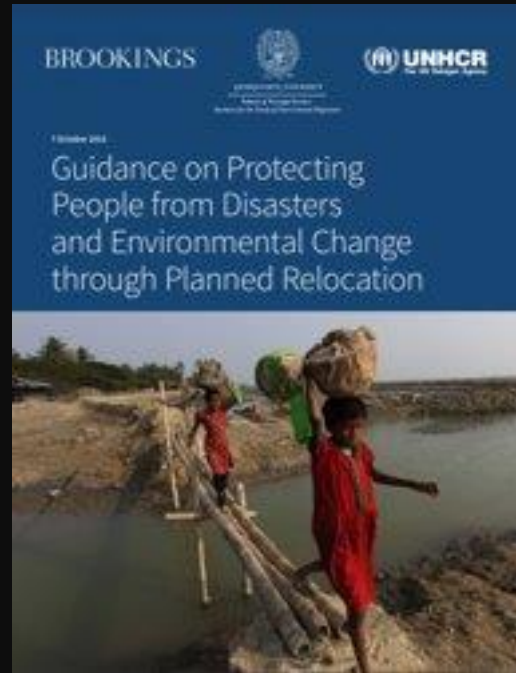


Taholah Village, Quinault Indian Nation,  
Washington State, USA

## Planned Relocations: Framing the Issue

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- “Proactive” / “Reactive” relocations (Bower & Weerasinghe), Forced-voluntary continuum (McAdam & Ferris; Warner et al. 2013)
- Multiple and complex drivers underpin planned relocations
- **Justice for historically-disadvantaged groups** (climate & environmental, social, economic, political and legal)
- Climatic and environmental change, human mobility and planned relocation - *What counts as ‘environmental displacement?’*



## Accounting for prior experiences of displacement

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14. The specific needs, circumstances, and vulnerabilities of Relocated Persons and Other Affected Persons, as applicable, should be taken into consideration and addressed in all phases of a Planned Relocation. Similarly, the specific rights of Relocated Persons, as applicable, shall be taken into consideration and addressed in all phases of a Planned Relocation. These specific rights, needs, circumstances, and vulnerabilities, may be linked, *inter alia*, to:

- a. demographic and health characteristics;
- b. socio-economic characteristics;
- c. membership of a marginalized group;
- d. special dependency on, and/or attachment to, land or local/localized resources/opportunities;
- e. direct and indirect impacts of disasters or environmental change; or
- f. **prior experiences of displacement.**

# Prior Experiences of Displacement: Broadening the scope of 'Environmental Displacement'



MIGRATION



DISPLACEMENT



PLANNED  
RELOCATION



DISASTERS



CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SLOW-ONSET  
IMPACTS)



ENVIRONMENTAL  
DEGRADATION

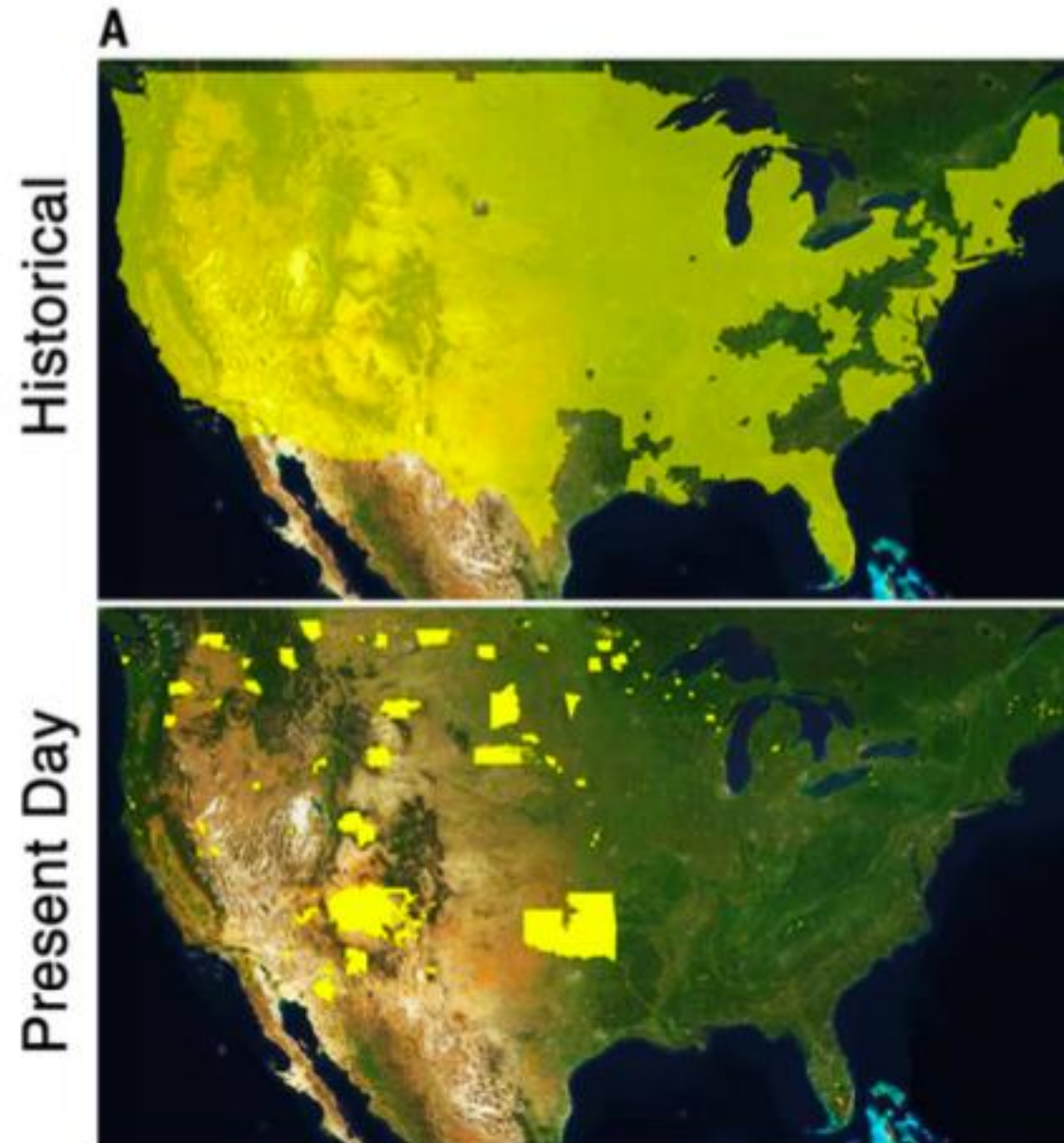
But what about?...

- Displacement tied to resource extraction
- Development-induced displacement and relocation
- Displacement tied to conservation
- Climate-based development-induced displacement (Adeola & Viljoen 2018), including climate change mitigation projects

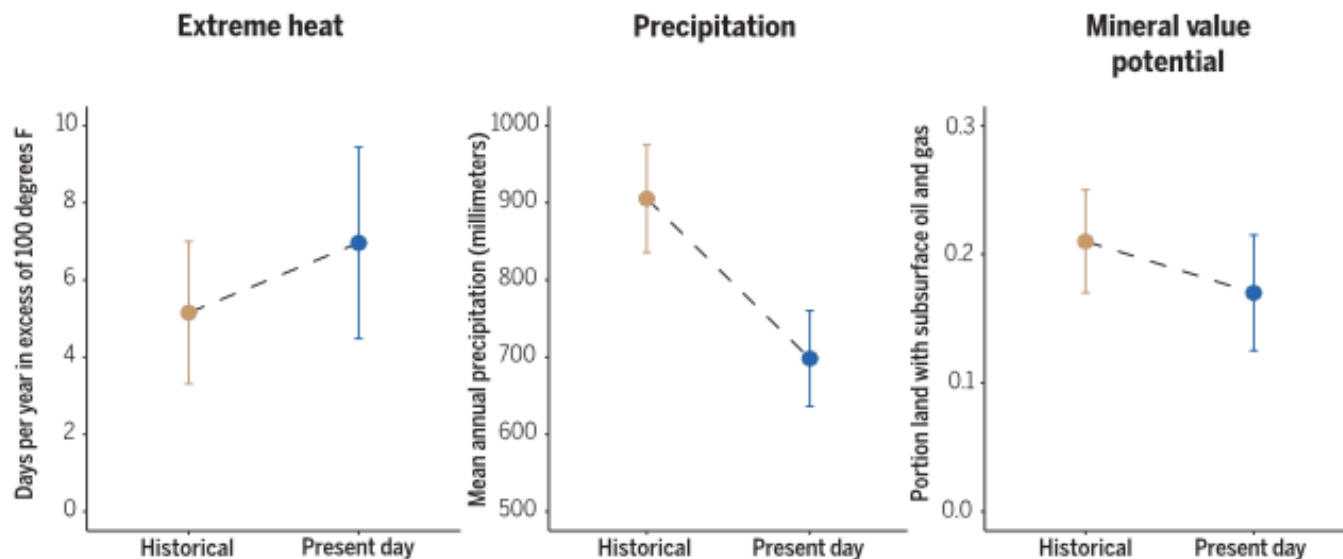
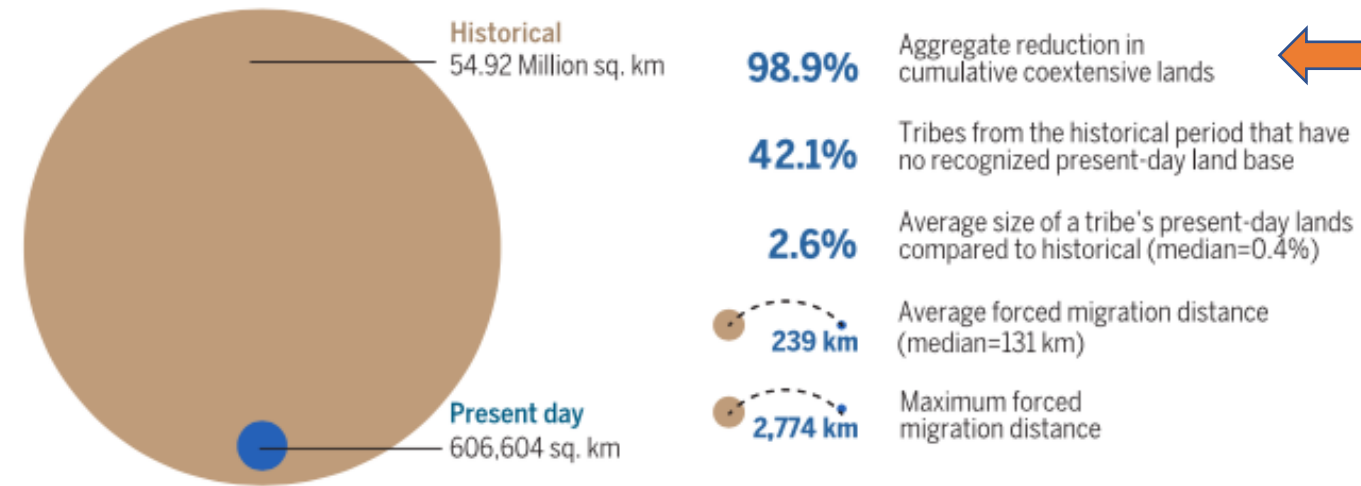


# “The biggest land grab in history”

(Judy Wilson, Chief of Neskonlith Indian Band).



## Estimated land area (coextensive)



**Land dispossession and forced migration impacts between historical and present-day periods.** (Top left) Proportion reduction for coextensive land area estimation (accounting for multiple tribes in a single area). Areas of circles correspond to estimated land areas. Limitations in the historical record likely result in an underestimation of total historical land area. (Bottom) Plots show changes in tribal land conditions (mean and 95% confidence interval) for selected variables.



Olympic Peninsula, Washington State

## Enduring Legacies of prior displacement

- Land ownership / holding systems
- Legal recognition of Indigenous peoples
- Free movement (or lack of)
- Agency in adaptation and relocation decision-making
- Food sovereignty (e.g. fishing rights)
- Historical & inter-generational trauma (Lehman 2017), disruptions to grievances of loss
- Mistrust of government officials
- Limited reparations or acknowledgement of historical harms

# How can we account for prior experiences of displacement during planned relocations?

**Justice** – Distributive, Restorative, Economic, Environmental  
Procedural, Contextual

## Agenda for future research:



**PARTICIPATORY  
ACTION RESEARCH**



**BOTTOM-UP CLAIMS-  
MAKING**



**BIOCULTURAL  
COMMUNITY  
PROTOCOLS**



An aerial photograph of a winding river flowing through a dense, lush green forest. The river is a vibrant blue-green color, contrasting with the deep green of the surrounding trees. The forest appears to be a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, creating a textured canopy. The river meanders through the landscape, forming several sharp turns and loops. In the top left corner, there is a solid orange rectangular bar.

Thank you!

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